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Biennial Report
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State Board of Charities
and Reform

1901-1902

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Report of the State Board of Charities.

Helena, Mont., Nov. 29, 1902.

To His Excellency,

GOVERNOR JOSEPH K. TOOLE:

Your State Board of Charities and Reform wishes to submit to you the following report for the two past years:

Each year your Board visited all the State institutions which are included in the list assigned to us. We visited only a part of the county institutions, as the appropriation accessible to this Board was not sufficient to meet the expenses of a visit to all our county institutions.

In the last week in October we visited the State Penitentiary at Deer Lodge. The Warden, Mr. Frank Conley, kindly escorted us through all the departments of the great prison. Four hundred and seventy convicts are securely housed here, and boarded and lodged at the expense of the State. Nine of these are women. Sixty per cent of all the prisoners are foreigners.

The new heating plant is a success and greatly adds to the comfort of all concerned. The forty-four stoves, formerly used, were no longer needed and have been moved out.

The prison has its own electric light plant, great bake ovens, fine shower baths, and steam laundry—in fact, the entire equipment is strictly modern and up to date. It is believed that the system of ventilation is not surpassed in any prison.

The prison library deserves special mention. With the \$5,000 fund presented by W. A. Clark, Jr., 3,730 volumes have already been selected under the direction of Mrs. W. W. Dixon of Butte.

Under the present laws and circumstances the management of the penitentiary is very good indeed. But in behalf of the moral interests of the convicts and certain economic interests of the State, there are a few changes and improvements which in the opinion of your Board ought to be made. We, therefore, submit to your earnest consideration the following recommendations:

First:—That a separate building be erected for the women, and that the yard for the same be surrounded by a stone wall, so that the women convicts may have a chance for out-door exercise entirely by themselves.

Second:—That a chaplain be appointed for the State penitentiary, even if it is necessary to make a special appropriation of \$1,500 annually to sustain a man in this particular work. We wish to emphasize the need of a chaplain; first, from the fact that in the United States there is one minister to every two hundred of our population, and yet in our State penitentiary there are nearly five hundred people with no regular minister. An occasional visit from the local ministers in Deer Lodge is practically all the religious instruction they receive. It is very evident that there is no class of people more in need of religious training and moral encouragement than these convicts. Again, a chaplain would be of great value in the library in the way of helping to direct their reading into lines that would be helpful, and, also, in giving instructions in the common branches of study. But, possibly, the greatest way he could serve them, would be to help those pardoned or released from prison to secure honest employment and encourage them to work instead of relaxing into that idleness which breeds crime. Too many of those released return for a second or third term. We believe that an honest wideawake chaplain would greatly lessen the number of those who return for a second term.

Third:—We believe the time has come when there should be a change from the contract system. We believe that the labor of convicts should be so utilized as to directly assist the State in the support of her criminal class.

Fourth:—We wish to call your attention to the sad fact that under the present law there is but little chance for labor to be done at our State penitentiary. In our opinion there is nothing which ruins character more rapidly than enforced idleness. The State should have the benefit of the labor of the convict, and the convict needs the self respect and courage which honest labor gives. It seems, therefore, a debt to the State and a debt to the convict that they have a work to do. We are always the friend of the laboring man, but cannot work be given the convict without injuring the laboring man? We ask for the careful consideration of this great question.

While considering the case of the criminal class, we desire to say that we have learned that in many of our county jails no opportunity is given for out-door exercise. In some cases, even where there is a high fence or wall around the jail, no chance is given the prisoners for exercise out in the sunshine. Would it not be a benefit to the moral and physical health of our county prisoners if more attention was given to this matter.

The Reform School at Miles City, which was visited by the Secretary of the State Board of Charities and Reform in the second week in November, seems to be in a very satisfactory condition. Eighty-one boys and twelve girls are now under training at this institution.

Superintendent C. B. Dickinson and his fourteen helpers seem to be conducting this institution in a very satisfactory manner. However, the Superintendent and all his force are kept very busy. It keeps them all busy to keep the boys and girls busy. That is the chief secret of their success in training. Every boy and girl must be actively engaged in something. All the children must attend school half a day on the five school days of every week, and study the common branches taught in our public schools. Competent teachers direct and help them in their studies. Half of every week day is devoted to manual training. There is always enough to do for the girls, but in the winter it takes considerable planning to keep the boys busy. The girls are taught house-keeping, cooking, sewing and cutting, and washing and ironing, and at odd times are helped in fancy needle work. The institution has one hundred acres of land. Seventy-five acres are under cultivation. In the spring, summer and fall the boys are employed in plowing, sowing, weeding, irrigating and harvesting. Eight horses are used. Ten cows are cared for. Seventy hogs are fed and fattened. Enough vegetables and smaller fruits are raised for the entire institution.

Farming is the chief employment of the boys. Eighteen or twenty are drilled in a brass band. All who can sing are taught vocal music. A firstclass shoe-maker has been employed to teach the boys the shoemaker's trade. In learning this trade a few of the boys are making creditable progress.

Material for an ice house, wagon shed and hog-pens are greatly needed.

It is the opinion of your Board that as soon as possible one or two more branches of mechanics should be taught at this in-

stitution. Nearly all the boys are from towns and they expect to return to towns when released. Therefore mechanics will be of greatest use to them in preparing them for a useful and independent living.

STATE SOLDIERS' HOME.

Rev. W. W. Van Orsdel visited the State Soldiers' Home at Columbia Falls. Rev. Van Orsdel was accompanied by Rev. T. C. Iliff, D. D., ex-chaplain in chief of the Grand Army, and both gentlemen were much impressed with the home and its condition.

In Rev. Van Orsdel's report he says: We received a most hearty welcome from Captain Hilman and the old soldiers of the home, and we were much pleased with the workings of the institution, as viewed by us.

The board of managers is composed of C. B. Miller, president; H. S. Howell, secretary; J. L. Sloane, A. Ingraham and A. M. Bull. Capt. J. R. Hillman was selected in June, 1897, as the first commander, which position he has filled most satisfactorily.

The location of the home in the Flathead valley is very beautiful. On the east lies the main range of the Rocky mountains, on the west and north are the Kootenais and on the south is Mount Meadow. The valley is approximately sixty miles long and fifty-five miles wide, making an area of three thousand square miles. It is well watered by large rivers and their tributaries, while dotted here and there are at least a score of beautiful lakes varying in size from about a quarter of a square mile to the great Flathead lake which is thirty-five miles long and has an average width of fifteen miles. There are extensive forests throughout the valley and in the mountains which are productive of more lumber than any other part of the State. This magnificent valley is not only picturesque and beautiful but is one of the most productive in the United States.

The building of the home is a fine three-story brick, and will comfortably accommodate at least sixty-five. We found the sanitary conditions good and everything had a well-kept, homelike appearance.

There is in connection with the building a well-equipped hospital which is adequate for all the needs of the home.

The grounds contain one hundred and forty-seven acres, forty acres of which have been tilled. Six acres are in an orchard of four hundred trees, some of which are bearing fruit. Three hundred shade trees have also been planted, beautifying the premises. Small fruits, such as strawberries, gooseberries, raspberries and currants are produced in abundance and potatoes and other vegetables are raised in sufficient quantities to supply the home.

There are sixty-two old veterans taking a well deserved rest in the home. These represent nineteen different states, New York coming first with thirteen, Pennsylvania and Maine following with seven each, and the others with a smaller representation. Two served in the Mexican war, Geo. Rice and Warren Lovill both of Illinois. J. J. Norjard and C. S. Stetten served their country in the Philippine war, the former in the First Montana, and the latter in the Thirteenth Minnesota.

As we looked into the faces of these brave men who in the early sixties took their lives in their own hands, as it were, and did such valiant service for their country, we noted the dim eye, the silvery hair, and the feeble step telling us in unhidden language that their ranks are being rapidly thinned.

Since the home opened thirty-seven have received their last discharge (nine of these coming during the last year), have heard their last tattoo, have answered their last roll call, have received their summons from a higher commander and passed into the ranks of the great beyond, but in the language of the immortal Lincoln, "They have not died in vain."

There being no regularly appointed chaplain, Rev. R. M. Craven, superintendent of the Flathead Mission, resident of Columbia Falls, has rendered efficient service to the home. Though he served in the Confederate army he is received most cordially and thus the blue and the gray are mingled together in harmony.

ORPHANS' HOME.

Rev. W. W. Van Orsdel visited the Orphans' Home, located at Twin Bridges, on October 22nd. The Home is beautiful for situation near the confluence of the Beaverhead, Bighole and Ruby rivers. This is one of the most picturesque spots in the southern part of the State.

The Orphans Home is one of the most important of the State's charitable institutions. The gathering and instructing these homeless and orphan children is far reaching into the generations that are to follow.

The Board of Trustees are Pat Carney, president; J. R. Comfort, secretary; Amos Eastman, treasurer; Mart Elser and Wm. M. Oliver.

Wiley Mountjoy is Superintendent. The Trustees with the Superintendent have planned wisely, and have made a most splendid showing with the small funds that have been at their disposal.

The average attendance during the year has been one hundred and fifteen. Two fifths of these are girls and three fifths are boys. They come from twenty-one different counties of the State. There are three teachers in the school which is under good discipline and doing most efficient work. Eighty-four of the children are in the school, and the remainder are infants or too young for school work. Nearly all of these children are bright and promising.

In all there are twelve ladies and two men employed. Ten acres are under cultivation. Seventeen hundred dollars worth of vegetables have been produced during the past year. The cost of keeping these children was found to be very meager, showing great economy in the management.

An addition has been built to the main building thirty-six by sixty, three stories, with basement, in all twenty rooms.

A very fine sewerage system has been but in recently. The health is something remarkable. Since the institution opened nine years ago there have been but five deaths. Two were accidentally drowned, two infants died that were sick when they were brought there, and only one took sick and died in the institution.

During the year forty-eight have been sent out into good homes. We consider that this is a very wise plan to place these children in good homes, and we recommend that there should be a field agent whose business would be to look up these homeless children and find homes for them. We further recommend that a lighting plant be put in as the present means of lighting is inadequate and endangers life and property.

THE INSANE ASYLUM.

At Warm Springs, Montana.

This institution was visited and thoroughly inspected by the entire Board on October 28th and 29th, 1902. On Dec. 1st, 1901, there were 489 patients in the asylum, 383 males and 106 females. During the last year 169 were admitted, of whom 131 were males and 38 females. The whole number of patients treated during the year was 514 males and 144 females, a total of 658. There was discharged as recovered 51 males and 20 females, a total of 71. A number, viz, 15 males and 5 females were discharged as improved. Five of the inmates escaped, and 42 died; 32 males and 10 females. There were in the institution on November 30th, 1902, 411 males and 109 females; total, 520. These figures show an increase in total number of patients during the year of 31, 28 males and 3 females. The percentage of recoveries on number admitted was 42. The percentage of deaths during the fiscal year of the entire number treated was 6.3.

Of the 520 patients remaining in the institution on November 30th, 1902, 38 are idiots, 8 are imbeciles and 28 are epileptics. The remainder of the whole number is divided among the various forms of mental alienation.

Of the 42 deaths one was due to pneumonia, one to peritonitis, and one to acute nephritis. All the other deaths were due to chronic wasting diseases, not a single case being attributable to acute infectious disease. No contagion of any kind entered the asylum during the year.

The Board examined the system of book-keeping which prevails at the institution, and commends especially the minute and pains taking account which is kept in the case of each individual. No more thorough and efficient work have we ever seen in this line anywhere. From the books of the institution the foregoing statistics are reproduced.

For healthfulness, cleanliness and the quietness of the surroundings of this hospital, which it virtually is, the general situation could most probably not be duplicated in any part of the State.

This Board examined into the condition and conduct of the asylum quite thoroughly. All the rooms and wards were visited, and note was taken especially of the general appearance of the inmates, and inquiry was made into the daily and hourly attention given them by the Superintendent and numerous assistants.

We found the general oversight to be competent and unremitting, and the medical attention given especially satisfactory.

The rooms and wards were clean, well ventilated, the clothing sufficient and the food, which was carefully examined, ample and satisfactory. The management is considerate, the treatment of these unfortunate members of society humane, as far as the Board could see and learn upon inquiry, and, therefore, the Board would commend strongly the entire institution, its work and its methods, as seen especially in the large per cent of recoveries—results which compare very favorably with those of the old and well equipped institutions of our eastern states.

We propose but a single recommendation, and that is, that the Legislature at its coming session make special and separate provision for the State's feeble-minded persons outside of the insane asylum. Their daily association with the insane is detrimental to both.

THE STATE DEAF AND DUMB ASYLUM.

At Boulder, Montana.

This institution is under the management of Superintendent Thomas S. McAloney. The official visit of the Board was made Dec. 3rd, 1902. During the year ending November 30th, 1902, the total enrollment was 51. Fourteen of these are blind, and 37 deaf. Of the deaf, 20 are boys and 17 girls, and the blind are equally divided between the sexes. The attendance at this school should be much larger. The equipment in buildings and in opportunities for improvements for the State's deaf and blind is excellent, but it seems that many of the parents or guardians of such children do not seem to care to take advantage of the same. It seems to this Board, that steps should be taken for the purpose of bringing all the blind and deaf children of the State under the educational influences of this school, and thus prepare them in a measure at least for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship and put at their command the means of self-support and self-help.

The buildings with their school rooms, sleeping apartments, dining rooms, etc., were visited and thoroughly inspected. All seem to be well adapted for their use, except that the halls of the old building should be made much more cheerful and attractive than they are to-day. The food of the scholars was examined

and found to be excellent. The bedding is clean and ample, and there was a general air of cheer and contentment in the schools, which was marked and could not be overlooked.

The health of the pupils has been satisfactory, for no serious sickness has made its appearance among them during the year.

The methods employed in the instruction of the pupils are the best and most approved. The results achieved are often surprising and gratifying indeed. This Board took special pains to examine the proficiency of the blind in their ability to read, and of the deaf in speaking and lip-reading. A remarkable advance in general results had been made since our last visit.

The industrial department is made prominent in the school. In the carpenter shop articles of furniture are made and repaired by the pupils under the instruction of a competent teacher. All the farm buildings, that have been erected, are the work of the boys, who are learning the carpenter trade. They, also, set up the type for and print a bi-weekly paper, called *The Rocky Mountain Leader*. The girls receive instruction in the sewing room, and some of the older ones are also engaged in the work of the laundry.

The blind boys are taught piano tuning, piano repairing and hammock weaving, while sewing and bead work are taught the girls. A carpet loom was in operation during our visit, and carpet weaving is now taught to both boys and girls.

All the land belonging to the school is under cultivation. The yield last year was approximately 15 tons of hay, \$150; 2 tons of peas, \$36; wheat for chickens, \$10; 10,000 pounds of potatoes, \$75; 8 hogs, \$144; small fruits and vegetables, \$20; total, \$435.

Four years ago this Board spoke of the care of the feeble-minded of the State, who are now looked after by the Superintendent of the Insane Asylum at Warm Springs. The law of the State provides, that they shall really find a home in the institution at Boulder. The total number of feeble-minded at the Insane Asylum is 74. Of these probably 30 are of school age, and should be provided for by the State, entirely separate from the influences of the asylum for the insane. Special provision should be made for these unfortunates for they cannot be treated in a proper manner educationally at the Warm Springs institution.

We recommend that the Legislature look into this matter at the earliest possible moment, and that, if thought best, a separate building be erected for the feeble-minded of school age at

Boulder, separate entirely from the school for the deaf and blind, but under the same general management.

We also recommend, in harmony with a similar recommendation of this Board in a former report, that the legal name of the institution be changed from the "State Deaf and Dumb Asylum" to the "School for the Deaf and Blind."

Respectfully submitted,

E. J. GROENEVELD, President.

WALETR M. JORDAN, Secretary.

W. W. VAN ORSDEL,

State Board of Charities and Reform.



